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S E R M O N

PREACH'D BEFORE THE

P R I S O N E R S

Under Sentence of Death, in Newgate, *Bristol*,

On TUESDAY the 24th of SEPTEMBER,

And at their earnest Desire, the FRIDAY following, being
the Day of their Execution.

By the Rev. JAMES BULLER, M. A. *of Bristol*

Them that Sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

1 TIM. V. 20.



B R I S T O L:

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

AND THE NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Under the authority of the Trustees of the British Museum
and the National Anthropological Institute
the following is published
the Day of the Year



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HEBREWS ix. 27.

*It is appointed unto Men once to die, and after
this the Judgment.*

WHEN all the marvellous Works, which the Almighty spake into Being by the Word of his Power, made their first most glorious Appearance, stamp'd with a strong Impression of his boundless Goodness; how beautiful, brilliant, and ravishing a Scene was displayed to human View! The pleasing, the delightful, the Sight-refreshing Verdure of the Field blessed by God, was not sullied, eclips'd, or injur'd by the Thorn or Thistle, nor the Creature made subject to Vanity. Man, the Lord, the Fear, the Dread of all the Creatures in the World, shone forth as the Sun in his Strength, with a Boldness, Assurance, and Majesty of Countenance, natural to, resulting from, and the certain Concomitants of Innocency and Uprightness; being created after the Image and Likeness of God, in Righteousness and true Holiness. As when the tempestuous Wind and Storm executing God's Vengeance on a Nation, hath ravag'd and delug'd the Land; How instantly was the charming Prospect changed! How the Countenance of Man fallen! How have all those truest, those greatest, and most graceful Beauties of the
Face

Face fickened, faded, and utterly disappeared! There was no Poison of Death in any of the Creatures, nor the Kingdom of Death upon Earth; for God created Man to be immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own Eternity; through Envy of the Devil, and Man's woeful Disobedience came Sin into the World; and by Sin, the whole Train of Troubles, Sorrows, and Afflictions we suffer, as well as Death.

My Text confines me, to treat upon the two important Subjects of Death and Judgment: After which I will conclude, with a special Regard to those unhappy Persons under Sentence of Death, that are the sad Occasion of this Discourse.

FIRST of DEATH.

THE same GOD, who hath *wonderfully made us*, doth still as wonderfully preserve us; it is *he that took us out of the Womb, which holdeth our Soul in Life*. Men as well as the other Creatures, when the Almighty *hideth his Face, are troubled*; when *he taketh away their Breath, they die*; and *turn again to their Dust*.

GOD hath abundantly provided for all Mankind, and the Creatures by his Blessing have a great Virtue to support and nourish us; yet it is very observable that the Means appointed for the Stay and Preservation of our Health, too frequently prove the Impairers and Destroyers of it. There is nothing in the whole Creation so small, but having received a Commission from the Almighty, is able to put

put a Stop to the Breath of the greatest Monarch; to cut off those, that have run through the greatest Dangers, and conquered amazing Difficulties. Even those Spices and Drugs, preserving human Bodies in a State of Separation to a vast Length of Time, free from Putrefaction and Corruption; are unable to shield them from the Stroke of Death, or bring them back again to Life.

CHYMISTS extract the Oils, the Excellency, the Spirits, the Quintessence of Herbs and Minerals; and these are experimentally found to prevail often against the most malignant Diseases; to have wonderful Effects in the most violent Distempers; yet all their good Qualities and Virtues fall short of their usual Operation at the approach of Death. Remedies are prepared for every Malady, but nothing has Force or Efficacy enough to detain us long from the Grave. As the Loadstone attracts the Iron, the Grave seems to have the same magnetick Force upon us; and is never contented till it holds us in its cold Embrace. Death knows no Respect of Persons; the proud, the lowly; the ambitious, the contented; the Rich, the Poor; the Young, the Old; the learned, and the ignorant; as so many different Lines, meet in one common Center, the Grave. However unequal the Dispensations of Providence might seem to be in this Life, in Death all share alike; and he, whose insatiable Mind the whole World could not satisfy, has no greater Portion allotted him, than the meanest Person in the World. Those, that of all the Sons of Men, by their indefatigable Pains and Industry, have arrived at the greatest Skill and Judgment, in preparing and administering Medicines; and have surprisngly rescued
others

others, reduced to the Brink of the Grave by prevailing Diseases; do equally afford us an Example of our Mortality. Surely then that Gentleman of the Faculty, was too rash in his Judgment; and too hasty in his Proposal; who would engage (provided he had the sole Management of him from his Infancy) to render frail and weak Man immortal. This great undertaker would certainly upon Trial have found, that the more antient Position, of one of the first Founders of his Order, came much nearer the Truth; that Physick was a long Art, but Life short.

HAD we Faith enough, or rather the Weakness to believe the various and loud Declarations and Manifestos of idle Pretenders to this noble Art; we might securely triumph over Death, when the *Victory* of the Grave ceaseth. *The Enemy* so heavily clog'd by never-failing Medicines; so firmly fetter'd with infallible Prescriptions; and so strongly chained down by specifick Remedies; can never exert his Power again; or for the future make any Havock of, or bring Destruction upon Mankind. But notwithstanding all these vain Boastings, these extravagant Pretensions to all-sufficiency; it is Death alone, that in many Cases can alleviate the Rack of our Pain, and effectually cure us of all Diseases. So that *Death*, which hath *reigned from Adam to Moses, and from Moses until the present Time*; will certainly exercise its Dominion over Mankind, unto the Dissolution of all Things. When *all Rule, and all Authority and Power shall be put down*, then and not till then *shall that last Enemy be destroyed*; whose Kingdom shall only pass away with Time, be swallowed up, and lost in Eternity.

SOME

SOME just make their Appearance, and vanish away in the first Scene of Life; many are violently hurried away in the second; the most disappear in the third; whilst the few remaining to the fourth and last Scene, full of Infirmities as of Days; bowed down with Weakness, and sinking under the Decays of Nature, are carried off the Stage. *One Generation passeth away, and another cometh.*

GOD, who hath made nothing in vain; hath undoubtedly endowed the Creatures, with excellent Qualities and Virtues, for the Service and Relief of Mankind. The repeated Advice of the wise Son of *Sirach* is, in Sicknes to give Place to the Physician;—and to honour a Physician with the Honour due unto him. But we must apply to the LORD, before we apply to the Physician; lest we fall into the same Sin with *Aša*, of whom it is recorded, that in his Disease, he sought not to the LORD but to the Physicians. 2. Chron. xvi. 12.

THE *Issues of Life and Death* being in the Hand of GOD, we must beg his Blessing to our Endeavours; without which the most excellent Prescription, and all the combin'd Virtues of the Medicine will prove vain and insignificant. All go unto one Place; *all are of the Dust, and all turn to Dust again.*

MY Second Head is, the JUDGMENT.

THE Heathens, wisely considering, that their Conscience was always bearing Witness and their Thoughts accusing or excusing them; were naturally led to believe, that Rewards or Punishments would await them in another World.

THE

THE best Argument, that Mankind could draw from the Light of Nature, and the Strength of Reason, was taken from the Justice, the Equity, and Goodness of God. When they saw that the Dispensations of divine Providence, were promiscuously given to good and bad Men in this World; they imagin'd it reasonable to conclude, that all human Actions would be reviewed; and that unerring Justice would *recompence to ev'ry Man, according to his Deeds.* This indeed rais'd the Argument to a very great Probability of Truth, though not to a strict Demonstration. But *Life and Immortality is brought to Light through the Gospel.* Nothing is more plainly and openly declared to us in holy Scripture, than that after this mortal Life is ended, we shall enter into an immortal State; *for we know, that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of GOD, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens: And he hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World.*

THIS terrible Day of the LORD cometh as a Thief in the Night, but who may abide its coming? The LORD himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of GOD; the Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be raised. Then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory. Then shall the Heavens pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth also and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up. There shall be a great Earthquake, such as was not since Men were upon

upon the Earth so mighty an Earthquake, and so great; and the Sun shall become black as Sackcloth of Hair, and the Moon become as Blood; and the Stars of Heaven shall fall unto the Earth, even as a Figtree casteth her untimely Figs, when she is shaken of a mighty Wind: And the Heaven shall depart as a Scroul when it is rolled together; and every Mountain and every Island shall be moved out of their Places: And the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, and every Bondman, and every Freeman shall hide themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and say to the Mountains and Rocks fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? How solemn, how awful, how tremendous is the Apparatus that ushers in this great and terrible Day of the LORD, the Day of Judgment! It will unloose the Joints of the whole Frame of the most mighty Men, and make the stoutest Hearts quake and tremble.

BUT all this how shocking and dreadful soever, is but the Beginning of Sorrow, if compar'd with that Scene which immediately follows. For now all Men without Exception, standing before the *righteous Judge of the World*, the Books shall be opened; and GOD will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Then the Sentence will be pronounced, which will fix every one in an immutable State of Bliss and Happiness, or eternal Misery and Woe; which is not to be reversed, altered, or changed to all Eternity. Come, ye blessed

of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

I HAVE now done with my two first Heads, and will therefore conclude with a special Regard to you, that are unhappily the sad Occasion of this present Discourse.

To conquer Diseases, to prolong Life, and to postpone the fatal Stroke of Death; hath been the noble Care, Study, and Practice of many eminent Persons in most Ages. They have climbed the Hills above, travers'd the Valleys beneath; and not content with the strictest Examination of the Superficies, have even penetrated into the Bowels of the Earth. For this laudable End they frequently have not given *Sleep to their Eyes, or Slumber to their Eye-Lids*; neither have suffered the Temples of their Heads to take any Rest. They have discover'd by curious Experiments the latent Qualities of medicinal Waters; decocted the Plants; and tortur'd the Minerals. But we now see our Species, too frequently dispatch'd out of this World by the violent and inhuman Stroke on the Head. To prevent this, Cephalicks and internal Medicines availing Nothing; the Halter, an external properly applied, is prescribed, and strongly insisted upon, as the only infallible Method. Such Maimings, Barbarities, and Murders as are so frequently committed upon the Bodies of his Subjects; have even forced the well-known Lenity, of our most gracious Sovereign, against his natural, his royal Inclinations; into the Severity of the Law.

ALL *that are* worthily put in *Authority* under him, have taken the Alarm : And as the Magistrates of this City, have eminently distinguish'd themselves upon the Occasion, by being resolutely and unanimously determin'd, either to scour such Banditti, not only from the Streets, but Neighbourhood of this City ; or to prosecute them with the utmost Rigour of the Law ; we acknowledge and *accept* their great Care and Vigilancy *with all Thankfulness*.

THE chief End and Design of all Discourses upon the Subject of Death and Mortality, is not so much to convince Men of it's Certainty ; as to rouze, quicken, and spur them on to a diligent and faithful Discharge of their Duty, *that they may lay Hold on eternal Life*. I never heard that the wise Prince, who order'd a Monitor, to put him in Mind of his Mortality every Morning ; was ever in the least doubtful of its Truth and Reality : His Actions clearly demonstrated, that the Admonition served to quicken his Diligence, in prosecuting the Measures he had fixed upon, with Vigour and Efficacy. But surely though it were possible for any of the Sons of Men, to be so far infatuated as to entertain such a Thought ; you must undoubtedly be of a different Way of thinking, for whom the Time, the Place, and the Manner how you are to be shamefully and ignominiously executed, are all fix'd.

THAT Criminal must have a stony Heart indeed, who is not moved at the hearing the Sentence of Death, pronounced against him with Justice : For I would observe to you, that the Crime, for which you are to suffer, is, and always has been by all civilized Nations, deemed capital.

THE

THE Tartars, and all such like Free-Booters, that make no Conscience of invading and plundering the Nations they border upon, do yet wisely forbear to spoil, or prey upon one another: And even a Band of Robbers can subsist no longer, than the same Principle proves the Cement of their Wickedness.

THAT Criminal must have a Heart harder then the Adamant, who, after Sentence of Death passed, all Hopes of a Reprieve vanish'd; laments nothing more, than the Loss of an Opportunity of doing greater Mischief; of adding Sin unto Sin, and of *incurring the greater Damnation.*

I HAVE made the foregoing Remarks on your Account, * who have most impiously wished in your late wretched Circumstances (every one that hears it will shudder, except perhaps yourself, though that is my only Aim) that you had added Murder, to Robbery. Are you indeed afraid, that the Sins you have already committed, are not sufficient to sink you low and deep enough in the bottomless Pit, that you should desire to appear before the tremendous Judge of all Men, with Hands reeking in your Fellow Creatures Blood? What I seek is your Salvation; you have not wronged me. What I say, is intended purely for your eternal Welfare; I have no Injury to retaliate: *I am your Bone and your Flesh*; and would fain be thought, what I am indeed, *jealous over you with godly Jealousie.*

I AM heartily sorry for it, that both of you under Sentence of Death, have been bred up in a different Religion from

* The Woman RESPITED.

from me; more especially that Religion, which affirms Ignorance to be the Mother of Devotion. I cannot therefore expect that *that Word of God which is indeed quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*; should have its due Influence and Efficacy, without an extraordinary Measure of God's Grace, and the Assistance of his holy Spirit.

IF it seemeth unto you but a small Thing to be guilty of the Breach of God's Commandments; hear the terrible Judgments of an Almighty God, denounced even against his chosen People the Israelites, that should dare be guilty of it. *If ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these Commandments; I also will do this unto you, I will even appoint over you Terror; and I will set my Face against you, and ye shall be slain before your Enemies: They that hate you shall reign over you, and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven Times more for your Sins. And I will break the Pride of your Power; and I will make your Heaven as Iron, and your Earth as Brass, and your Strength shall be spent in vain: For your Land shall not yield her Increase, neither shall the Trees of the Land yield their Fruits. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these Things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will yet punish you seven Times more for your Sins. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me: Then I will walk contrary unto you also in Fury:*

Fury: And I, even I, will chastise you seven Times for your Sins.

THESE severe Threatnings, upon their Disobedience, lighted upon them with a Vengeance: So that it became a Proverbial saying, that no Judgment befel them after their worshipping the Golden Calf, but had at least an Ounce of the Gold in it. Their repeated Provocations at Length so incensed their merciful God and Saviour, that he brought upon them great Tribulation and Affliction; such as was not *since the Beginning of the World to this Time, no nor ever shall be.* It is observable that the Romans were a generous Enemy, that the Commander in Chief at the Siege and overthrow of *Jerusalem*, was as humane, kind, and merciful a Man; as a bold, intrepid, and unconquer'd Heroe: Yet Notwithstanding his natural Disposition; that his very *Bowels* were *touch'd with the Feeling* of their Calamities, and *yearned with Compassion*; his mild Exhortations, and severe Threatnings prov'd alike eneffectual. The *Roman* Soldiery was never known to exercise an Avarice so insatiable, a Resentment so keen, or a Cruelty so unparallel'd. Other Kingdoms have been overturn'd with a Wind, but this was torn up from its deep Foundation by a Whirlwind. That People, whose Enemies were *swept away by the River Kishon, when the Stars in their Courses fought against Sifera*; was, like their mighty Oppressors the *Egyptians*, overwhelmed, *sunk, and drowned in the Red Sea*, their own Blood. When their great Deliverer from all their various Tribulations, Distresses, and Dangers, began to *make bare his Arm, to rule over them with an outstretched Arm, and with Fury poured out*; when he gave their Life over

over to the Pestilence, their Bodies to the Sword, and dispersed them, like the Chaff before the Wind, through the Countries; his Judgments surprized them amidst their Secularity; they smarted intolerably under what they little feared, his Indignation; and were crush'd under what they less regarded, the Power of his Wrath. And though a Root that beareth Gall and Wormwood, when he beareth these Words, shall bless himself in his Heart, saying, I shall have Peace though I walk in the Imagination of my Heart: The LORD will not spare him, but then the Anger of the LORD and his Jealousie shall smoke against that Man, and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him.

ST. John Baptist our Saviour's immediate Fore-Runner, declared that *the Axe was laid unto the Root of the Trees, that every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, might be cut down and cast into the Fire.* Thus our Saviour most effectually excites Men to Holiness, and most powerfully deters them from Sin, by the sure and certain Rewards or Punishments immutably fixed to both. And thus the great Apostle of the Gentiles, *zealous as one born out of due Time*, to promote the Welfare and Salvation of Mankind, tells us, that *the Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of GOD eternal Life, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

WHEN he would harangue an intemperate and unrighteous Man, as well as an unjust Judge; his Subjects are, *Temperance, Righteousness, and Judgment to come:* His Reasonings upon these well adapted Points, quite enervated this military Man: *Felix trembled.* And the same Apostle, most earnestly pressing Sinners, to make a due
Preparation

Preparation for another World; putteth them in Remembrance of the Certainty of the dreadful Day of Judgment. *We shall all appear before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad: Knowing therefore the Terrors of the LORD, we perswade Men.*

THOSE Expressions in holy Scripture, tho' they faintly represent the Punishment of the Wicked to all Eternity, are most alarming, being full of the greatest Terror; the *suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire,—utter Darknes,—the Bottomless Pit,—Hell Fire,—Fire that shall never be quenched,—Furnaces of Fire,—Lakes of Fire and Brimstone, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of Teeth,—a Worm that never dyeth.*

THE *King of Terrors* with large and quick Strides advancing, is ready to dispatch you out of this World, and the Spirit must return to God, who gave it. In the Instance of the good King *Hezekiah*, we may plainly perceive how dreadful the Arrest of Death naturally is, to a Man in the Prime and Vigour of his Age and Strength. For although, after the Prophet had solemnly declared, unto him, *thus saith the LORD, set thine House in Order: For thou shalt die and not live*; we find him appealing to God, that he had *walked before him in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and had done that which was good in his Sight*; yet the next Words inform us, that *he wept sore*. But bitter, intensely bitter must the Remembrance of Death be to you, that have been detected in, and must now receive the due Reward of your evil Deeds. In the cutting off of your Days,
you

you shall go to the Gates of the Grave: You are deprived of the Residue of your Years. If a temporal Death was the full Wages of Sin, the Punishment would not be so very disagreeable: The Gall of Bitterness is, to be conscious, or afraid that we are still in the Bond of Iniquity; and the Sting of Death is Sin. The Soul upon the Dissolution of its Union with the Body, must immediately appear before a most holy and just God. But oh, unless it be first wash'd in the Blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the Sins of the World, how will it appear! To reflect upon Eternity, is either the most pleasing or most dreadful Thought. To be assured that we shall have our Consummation in Bliss both in Body and Soul; and with Angels and Archangels and all the Company of Heaven, to be in full Possession of Joys, such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither doth enter into the Heart to conceive; more especially to see our great Creator as he is, in whose Presence there is Fulness of Joy and at whose Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore; is ravishing. To have a Conscience accusing, and bearing Witness to this great Truth, that the Wicked shall be banished from the Presence of the LORD, be thrust down into Hell, and be tormented with its everlasting Flame, in Company of the Devil and his Angels, is most shocking and dreadful.

IT is more than high Time for you, that have been lulled asleep by Satan, to *awake to Righteousness*, and to *work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling. The Kingdom of Heaven must be taken by you with Violence; and now, or never. For when once you have shot that Gulph never to be repass'd, the Opportunity will be lost*
for

for ever, and Time shall be no more. Reflection will then quicken the dreadful Anguish, and stimulate the intolerable Pangs and immense Vexation of your Hearts; your Care then will serve to involve you in Distraction, but come quite too late to save you. Think seriously and to good Purpose, in what a short Space of Time, the Officers of Justice will demand your Bodies; and the Executioner shew no Pity on them. Beg of the Almighty, earnestly, fervently, and importunately, to grant you the Grace of Repentance; that worthily lamenting your Sins, and acknowledging your Wretchedness; in the Hour of your Deaths, and in the Day of Judgment, of his infinite Goodness he may have Mercy upon, and deliver you.

PERMIT me most earnestly to intreat all that are present, not to *prophane the LORD's Sabbath*: Avoid Drunkenness, and *flee youthful Lusts*, which directly lead you to a fatal Necessity, of falling headlong upon certain Destruction. Be careful of your Company: *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*. Be honest, be *diligent in Business*, and just in all your Dealings. Should unavoidable Contingencies reduce you to any *great Strait*; apply to some, of the many well-known Gentlemen in this opulent City, whose Hearts being affected with the Feeling of the Distresses of their Brethren; their Purses are as open, as their Ears, both to hear and assist them. Should Poverty still reduce you lower, there is a sufficient Provision made for the Needy. If through Shame of complying with this, or by any other Motive you are tempted to arm yourselves, with the *Instruments of Unrighteousness* and Cruelty; and by rapine,

rapine, Violence, and even Blood-shedding to provide for yourselves; consider that the Judge of all Men is both Omnipresent and Omniscient; that the Eye of the Magistrates is watchful and piercing; and that their laudable Example will naturally render others, swift, active, and bold in pursuing after, in searching for, and securing you. Reflect seriously, how grievous will be the Loss of Liberty! How irksome the *being bound in Affliction and Iron!* How intolerable the Confinement in a loathsome Dungeon! And that your final Release will yet even be more wretched, than your *first State*: For you will be haled away, as the unhappy Persons now before us shortly must, to the Place of Execution; and be *made a sad Spectacle unto the World, and to Angels, and Men.* To prevent this effectually, *Love thy Neighbour as thyself. Fear God. Honour the King.*

Now, to GOD, &c.

GRANT we beseech thee Almighty GOD, that the Words which we have now heard, may through thy all-sufficient Grace rouse and quicken us all, more especially those that are appointed to die, from the Death of Sin unto the Life of Righteousness; unto the Honour and Praise of thy great and holy Name, and to the eternal Welfare both of our Souls and Bodies through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

F I N I S.

